

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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-----129002 192346Z /73
O 192236Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: HO,BDIS

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE DEL WEBB CASE

1. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMEN INTERESTED IN DEL WEBB CASE HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED TO USE THREATS AGAINST ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR HONDURAS IN ATTEMPT TO INDUCE GOH TO RESPOND TO DEL WEBB CLAIM SUBMITTED IN NOVEMBER 1977. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY AT ITS DISCRETION IS AUTHORIZED TO MAKE KNOWN TO GOH INTENDED CONGRESSIONAL PLOY AND DEPARTMENT WILL WELCOME EMBASSY REPORT OF GOH REACTION. DEPARTMENT ALSO REQUESTS EMBASSY TO IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY GOH MOVEMENT TOWARD DECISION.

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3. STAFF TO ARIZONA CONGRESSMAN ELDON RUDD PHONED ARA/CEN TODAY (JUNE 19) TO INFORM OF CONGRESSMAN RUDD'S INTENTION TO READ HISTORY OF GOH UNRESPONSIVENESS TO DEL WEBB CLAIM INTO CONGRESSIONAL RECORD DURING THURSDAY, JUNE 22 DEBATE ON FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS. MR. RUDD'S STAFFER ADDED THAT CONGRESSMAN INTENDS TO THREATEN "RESTRICTION" OF \$23.4 MILLION ECONOMIC AND MILITARY

ASSISTANCE IF GOH MINISTER OF FINANCE DOES NOT ISSUE
DECISION PRIOR TO SENATE DEBATE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

APPROPRIATION WHICH IS EXPECTED IN APPROXIMATELY THREE
WEEKS. SENATOR DECONCINI LETTER OF JUNE 7 TO SENATOR
INOUE (QUOTED BELOW) INDICATES FORMER'S READINESS TO
COOPERATE WITH HOUSE ATTEMPT TO USE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS
AS A LEVER TO OBTAIN GOH DECISION. DEPARTMENT DOES NOT
KNOW FURTHER EXTENT OF HOUSE OR SENATE SUPPORT. RUDD
STAFFER DOES NOT APPEAL TO ANY LEGISLATION SUCH AS
HICKENLOOPER AMENDMENT NOR HOLD ANY OPINION ON WHAT
AMOUNT WOULD CONSTITUTE AN EQUITABLE GOH PAYMENT.

4. DEPARTMENT HAS INFORMED CHARGE HONDURAN EMBASSY OF
THESE CONGRESSIONAL INTENTIONS.

5. SENATOR DENNIS DECONCINI SENT FOLLOWING LETTER DATED
JUNE 7 TO SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS.
QUOTE: DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I HAD A MEETING WITH THE RE-
PRESENTATIVES OF THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT AND THE DEL WEBB
CORPORATION, AT WHICH TIME THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT
ASSURED ME THAT THEY WOULD RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
AND IN WHAT AMOUNT THERE IS A DEBT DUE AND PAYABLE TO DEL
WEBB CORPORATION BY THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT.

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TO THIS DATE, THERE HAS BEEN NO REPLY, EITHER AFFIRMATIVELY
OR NEGATIVELY. THIS IS A MATTER THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.

I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS MATTER BRIEFLY WITH YOU AND HOPE
THAT SOME WAY CAN BE FOUND TO BREAK THIS IMPASSE. END
QUOTE.

6. IN RESPONSE TO LETTERS DATED MAY 31 AND JUNE 6 FROM
NEVADA SENATOR HOWARD W. CANNON AND NEVADA CONGRESSMAN
JAMES D. SANTINI TO DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHELTON
DEPARTMENT WILL RESPOND AS FOLLOWS (LETTERS NOT YET
SIGNED)

QUOTE: YOU ARE AWARE FROM EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE WITH
THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT SINCE DEL WEBB SUBMITTED A NEW
SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL IN NOVEMBER 1977, DEL WEBB'S ATTORNEY,
JORGE FIDEL DURON, HAS INSISTED THAT ANY REPRESENTATIONS TO
THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD
BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO HIS EFFORTS. HENCE, THE EMBASSY
HAS CONTINUED TO SEEK STATUS REPORTS ON HONDURAN GOVERNMENT
ACTION THROUGH MR. DURON.

IN MID-APRIL, MR. DURON INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT THE CLAIM SETTLEMENT RESOLUTION HAD BEEN PREPARED AND AWAITED THE SIGNATURES OF THE FINANCE MINISTER AND THE CHIEF OF STATE. THE RESOLUTION, SUBSEQUENT TO SIGNATURE, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE, AFTER WHICH IT COULD BE APPEALED BEFORE THE HONDURAS SUPREME COURT.

DURING APRIL AND MAY THE EMBASSY CONTINUED VOLUNTEERING TO HELP EXPEDITE A SATISFACTORY DECISION BY APPROACHING, SINGLY OR JOINTLY WITH MR. DURON, THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE STATUS AND CONTENT OF THE RESOLUTION. MR. DURON CONTINUED TO EMPHATICALLY DECLINE THE U.S. OFFER, EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS IN DAY-TO-DAY CON-

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TACT WITH THE FINANCE MINISTRY AND EXPECTED A GOVERNMENT DECISION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE WAS UNABLE TO COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS OF THE DECISION.

IN REPLY TO CONTINUING INQUIRIES TO MR. DURON, HE INFORMED OUR EMBASSY THAT THE MINISTER OF FINANCE HAD INDICATED TO HIM IN LATE MAY THAT HE WOULD SIGN THE RESOLUTION WITHIN A WEEK. WHEN THIS DID NOT OCCUR, THE EMBASSY (IN CONSULTATION WITH DEL WEBB, VICE PRESIDENT IN PHOENIX, JOHN P. BYRNE) OBTAINED MR. DURON'S CONCURRENCE TO DIRECTLY REQUEST A STATUS REPORT. THE SENIOR EMBASSY ECONOMIC OFFICER SPOKE WITH THE MINISTER OF FINANCE ON JUNE 7. THE MINISTER, IN REPLY, ONLY PROMISED A STATUS REPORT, AGAIN, "WITHIN A WEEK." THE EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP ON THE MINISTER'S PROMISE BY ALL APPROPRIATE AND PRODUCTIVE MEANS, EITHER THROUGH DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OR THROUGH MR. DURON. END QUOTE. VANCE

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